

# Stakeholder Engagement Plan






## Conargo Wind Farm and Battery

28 October 2024



Final

**Revision Control**

Revision	Date	Issue	Author	Reviewed	Approved	Signature
B000	15/02/24	Final Draft	Project Team	Project Manager	JP	
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**Document Review**

Document to be reviewed and updated every 12 months or as required by the project team.

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# 1 Overview

Squadron Energy (SQE) is committed to genuine, proactive and meaningful engagement with the community, developing long-term relationships and maintaining open lines of communication.

## 1.1 About Squadron Energy

Squadron Energy is Australia's leading renewable energy company that develops, operates and owns renewable energy assets in Australia.

We are 100 per cent Australian owned and have 1.1 gigawatts (GW) of renewable energy in operation and 900 megawatts (MW) under construction.

We are committed to delivering a 14GW development pipeline by 2030, powering the equivalent of six million Australian homes.

This will deliver about one third of the renewable energy required for Australia to meet its 2030 renewable energy target of 82 per cent.

With proven experience and expertise across the project lifecycle, we work with local communities and our customers to lead the transition to Australia's clean energy future.

## 1.2 Purpose of this plan

This Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP) has been developed for Conargo Wind Farm and Battery. It outlines SQE's understanding of the communities surrounding the project and our approach to community and stakeholder engagement. The plan also outlines the projects potential impacts and provides examples of opportunities that could be developed in consultation with local partners and communities depending on need.

**Table 1: Key Terminology**

Term	Description
AEMO	Australian Energy Market Operator
BCSD	Biodiversity, Conservation and Science Directorate
BOM	Bureau of Meteorology
CASA	Civil Aviation Safety Authority
CEC	Clean Energy Council
CIV	Capital Investment Value
DAFF	NSW Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry
DCCEEW	Federal Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water
DPHI	NSW Department of Planning Housing and Infrastructure
DPI	NSW Department of Primary Industries – Agriculture and Fisheries
DPIE	NSW Department of Planning, Infrastructure and Environment (now DPHI)
EIS	Environmental Impact Statement
EnergyCo	The Energy Corporation of NSW

Term	Description
EPA	Environment Protection Authority
IAP2	International Association of Public Participation
IBRA	Interim Biogeographic Regionalisation for Australia
LALC	Local Aboriginal Land Council
LEP	Local Environmental Plan
LGA	Local Government Area
LLS	Local Land Services
MEG	NSW Mining, Exploration and Geoscience
NEM	National Electricity Market
NSW DCCEEW	NSW Department of Climate Change Energy the Environment and Water
P&C	Parents and Citizens
RAP	Reconciliation Action Plan
REZ	Renewable Energy Zone
RFS	Rural Fire Service
SEARs	Secretary's Environmental Assessment Requirements
SEP	Stakeholder Engagement Plan
SIA	Social Impact Assessment
SSD	State Significant Development
SQE	Squadron Energy
VNI West	Victoria to New South Wales Interconnector West
VPA	Voluntary Planning Agreement
WTG	Wind Turbine Generators
YACTAC	Yanco Creek and Tributaries Advisory Council

### 1.3 Our approach to stakeholder engagement

Stakeholders vary, and can include host and neighbouring landowners, local communities, community interest groups, First Nations groups, government representatives, industry groups, and media, among others. Our approach is multi-faceted, to ensure comprehensive engagement across all groups, utilising the skills of our various teams. Landowners and hosts will most likely be engaging directly with project teams. Broader stakeholder groups may be engaging with a wider group of staff with expertise, including those in First Nations engagement, government relations, media and communications and community engagement.

We begin our engagement process by undertaking robust stakeholder mapping and analysis to understand the needs of the community and begin to build relationships from project inception.

This allows us to work collaboratively with communities and stakeholders to identify impacts, mitigate these, and also identify mutually beneficial legacy opportunities in areas where we locate our projects.

### 1.4 Our values

SQE's values underpin and guide our work.

**Table 2: Squadron Energy Values**

Humility	Generating Ideas
Courage and Determination	Integrity
Empowerment	Safety
Enthusiasm	Stretch Targets
Family	Frugality

## 1.5 Enquiries and complaints

Throughout the project lifecycle, stakeholders and members of the community have the opportunity to contact SQE via the project specific email address and phone number listed below.

The project team will respond to and resolve all complaints and enquiries as soon as possible. SQE tracks complaints, enquiries and action items.

Our [complaints management procedure](#) outlines how we will manage any complaints.

Project team details:

**Project Manager/Developer:** Jessica Barr

**Email:** conargowind@squadronenergy.com

**Phone:** 0480 019 836

## 1.6 Government and industry guidelines

This plan has been prepared considering the following:

- IAP2 (International Association for Public Participation) (2018), *Spectrum of Engagement*
- United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People (September 2007)
- DPIE (NSW Department of Planning, Infrastructure and Environment) (February 2023), *Social Impact Assessment Guideline for State Significant Projects*
- NSW DPIE (July 2021), *Undertaking Engagement Guidelines for State Significant Projects*
- NSW DPIE (December 2016), *Wind Energy Guideline for State Significant Wind Energy Development*
- NSW DPIE (November 2023), *Draft Energy Policy Framework*.

The focus of our engagement adheres to guidelines from two key organisations: the Clean Energy Council (CEC), and the IAP2.

### 1.6.1 Clean Energy Council

The CEC has prepared Community Engagement Guidelines (2018) which outline four principles which underpin best practice community engagement. In addition to incorporating our company values in our engagement with the community, SQE is committed to these best practice principles of openness, inclusiveness, responsiveness, and accountability.

We also reference CEC's document; *A Guide to Benefit Sharing Options for Renewable Energy Projects*. SQE is also a signatory to the CEC's Best Practice Charter for Renewable Energy Developments.

The Best Practice Charter is a set of voluntary commitments by Clean Energy Council members to engage respectfully with the communities in which they plan and operate projects, to be sensitive to environmental and cultural values and to make a positive contribution to the regions in which they operate.



### 1.6.2 International Association of Public Participation

Our approach to engagement is also informed by the Public Participation Spectrum developed by the IAP2. The IAP2 Spectrum outlines levels of engagement to suit varying degrees of impacts in the community.

Figure 1: IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation

		Increasing impact on the decision				
		Inform	Consult	Involve	Collaborate	Empower
Public participation goal		To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions.	To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.	To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.	To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.	To place final decision making in the hands of the public.
Promise to the public		We will keep you informed.	We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and aspirations, and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision. We will seek your feedback on drafts and proposals.	We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will work together with you to formulate solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible.	We will implement what you decide.

## 1.7 Stakeholder engagement objectives

Squadron Energy is committed to undertaking genuine and meaningful community and stakeholder engagement and consultation for the project. Success is critical to earning and maintaining social licence within the community. The communication and engagement objectives for the project are to:

- Seek feedback from the local community regarding the proposed project and integrate this feedback into the project planning and design as far as possible.
- Keep the community informed about the project, its likely impacts, and likely benefits, through the provision of early, accurate and timely information.
- Understand the potential social impact of the project to inform and implement mitigation measures.
- Provide multiple opportunities and mechanisms for meaningful engagement with all stakeholders.
- Ensure that the team developing the project fully understands the local context, including any local impacts that it may have or opportunities that it could provide; and
- Enable a smooth transition from the development to delivery and operational phases, maintaining community links and information.

# 2 The Project

## 2.1 Project location

The project is located approximately 10 kilometres (km) north east of Conargo within the Edward River Local Government Area (LGA) on Wamba Wamba and Perrepa Perrepa Country.

The Edward River LGA is located in the Riverina Murray Region of south western NSW, about 700km south west of Sydney and 300km north of Melbourne. The Edward River LGA covers an area of about 8,880 square kilometres and is bounded by the Hay Shire Council in the north, the Murrumbidgee Council and Berrigan Shire Council in the east, and the Murray River Council in the south and west.

In the 2021 Census, the Edward River LGA and township of Conargo had a population of 8,457 and 117 respectively. The Conargo township is surrounded by the nearby villages of Blighty, Mayrung, Pretty Pine, Wanganella and Booorooban. Residents of Conargo are primarily employed in the agriculture industry (grain sheep or grain beef farming and specialised sheep farming). The nearest major population centre is Deniliquin (population of 7,432) which is about 50km south west of the project site.

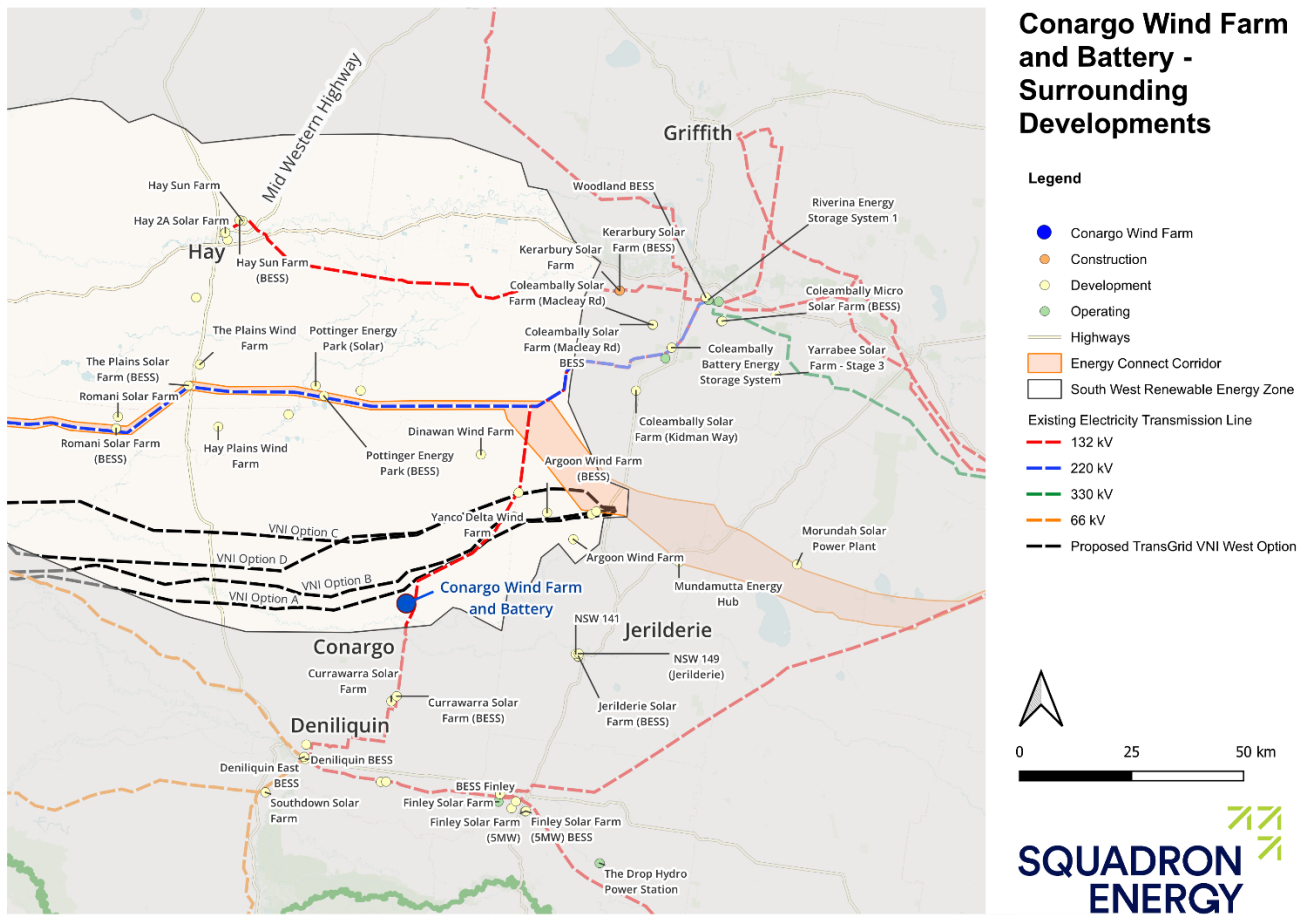
The project site consists of 19 lots which are privately owned and used for agriculture (grazing and some cropping). The project site is zoned as RU1 Primary Production under the Conargo Local Environmental Plan (LEP) 2013, as is all surrounding land.

The topography is generally flat with some minor undulations. The project site is located within the Riverina Interim Biogeographic Regionalisation for Australia (IBRA) bioregion which is characterised by extensive riverine floodplains with low relief, associated with the Murray, Murrumbidgee and Lachlan rivers. Shrublands and associated grasslands predominate. Other types of vegetation include box woodlands, mallee woodlands, native grasslands and wetlands.

The location is well suited to host wind turbine generators (WTGs) due to a reliable wind resource and position within the South West Renewable Energy Zone (REZ). The project is strategically located in an area identified by the NSW Government as suitable for renewable energy projects and will assist the NSW Government in delivering on the objectives for the [NSW Electricity Strategy](#) and the South West REZ.



Figure 2: Surrounding Projects in the South West REZ



There are several operational solar and proposed wind, solar and battery renewable projects within the South West REZ, surrounding the project in Figure 2. Approved and proposed renewable energy projects (based on current publicly available information) within 50km of the project are shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Surrounding renewable energy projects

Project	Application	Status	Indicative distance from Project (km)
Currawarra Solar Farm and BESS	SSD-8437	Approved	17
Yanco Delta Wind Farm and BESS	SSD-41743746	Approved	27
Dinawan Wind Farm	SSD-50725708	Planning	33
Argoon Wind Farm and BESS	SSD-64935522	Planning	33
Tarleigh Park Solar Farm and BESS	SSD-8436	Approved	36
Deniliquin East BESS	SSD-61612229	Planning	37
Dinawan Solar Farm and BESS	SSD-50725959	Planning	42
Finley Solar Farm	SSD-8540	Operational	45
Bullawah Wind Farm	SSD-50505215	Planning	45
Pottinger Energy Park (Wind)	SSD-59235464	Planning	47
Pottinger Energy Park (Solar)	SSD-59254709	Planning	50

## 2.2 Project context

The NSW Government has developed a plan called the Electricity Strategy and Electricity Infrastructure Roadmap to deliver a number of REZs within the state of NSW. These REZs will play a vital role in delivering affordable, reliable energy generation to help replace the state's existing power stations as they come to their scheduled end of operational life.

The Energy Corporation of NSW (EnergyCo) is the statutory authority responsible for leading the delivery of REZs.

The NSW South West REZ was formally declared by the NSW Minister for Energy in November 2022. The region was chosen due to its *'strong renewable energy resource potential, proximity to the existing grid and other considerations of potential interactions with existing land uses including agricultural lands and biodiversity conservation'* (EnergyCo. (n.d.). *South West Renewable Energy Zone*, April. 2024).

A REZ involves the coordinated development of new electricity grid infrastructure to connect multiple renewable energy generators (such as solar and wind farms) in the same location. The designation of a REZ is intended to develop additional capacity for renewable electricity generation, producing low-cost power for NSW homeowners and business, driving down carbon emissions within the electricity generation sector, and creating employment growth and opportunities through facilitating significant investment into the regions.

Further information, including interactive maps and project updates are available on [EnergyCo's website](#).

## 2.3 Project overview

The project includes the installation, operation, maintenance and decommissioning of a wind farm of up to 53 Wind Turbine Generators (WTGs), a battery energy storage system (BESS), ancillary infrastructure and temporary facilities. The project could have a generating capacity of approximately 300MW. The power generated by the project (from wind turbine generators and released from battery storage) would feed into the electricity grid, the National Electricity Market (NEM) via direct connection to either the existing TransGrid 132kV Deniliquin – Coleambally transmission line, or the proposed Victoria to NSW Interconnector West (VNI West) transmission line.

The key components of the project include:

- up to 53 WTGs, with a blade-tip height of up to 270m and generation capacity of approximately 300MW
- battery energy storage system (capacity and type to be determined)
- permanent ancillary infrastructure including:
  - operation and maintenance compounds
  - substation and switch station
  - internal roads and hardstands
  - transmission lines (underground and overhead cabling)
  - wind monitoring masts
  - telecommunication facilities
  - utility services
- temporary facilities and activities including:
  - site compounds, laydown and storage areas
  - stockpiling and rock crushing
  - concrete batch plants
  - temporary roads

- temporary monitoring masts.

### 2.3.1 Indicative project timeline

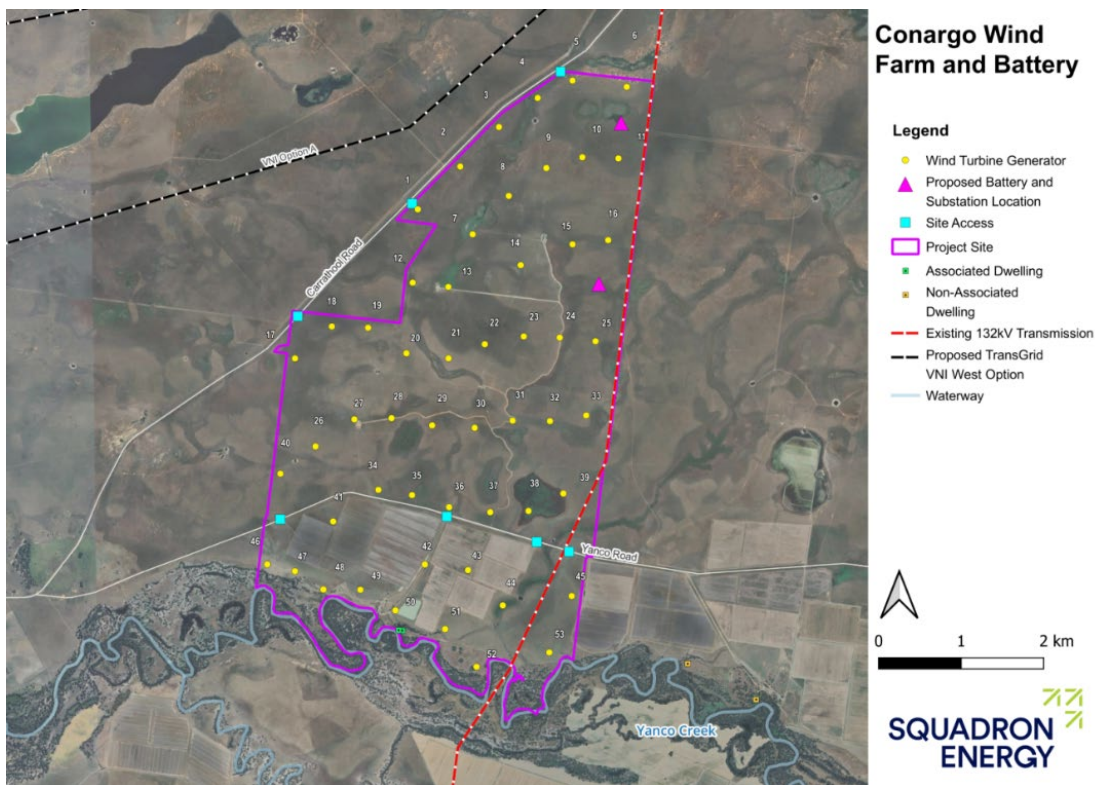
Figure 2: Proposed project timeline

#### Proposed timeline



## 2.4 Project site map

Figure 3: Indicative project layout



## 2.5 Community overview

The communities nearest to the Conargo Wind Farm and Battery consist of Conargo, Deniliquin, Hartwood and Jerilderie. Conargo is located approximately 10km to the south west and Deniliquin is 50km to the south west of the project site. Deniliquin is the largest town of the south western Riverina region, with a range of government and commercial services available to residents. Hartwood is located 36km to the south east and Jerilderie 67km to the east of the project site. The median age for these localities ranges from 36 to 49. The NSW median average is 39.

4.8 per cent of residents in the Edward River LGA identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, which is higher than the NSW average of 3.4 per cent. The median personal income for the Edward River LGA is \$701, compared with \$813 in broader NSW.

**Table 4: State Suburb data 2021 Australian Census**

State Suburb	Conargo	Deniliquin	Hartwood (data from 2016 Australian Census)	Jerilderie
People (no.)	117	7,432	19	922
Male (%)	59.3	48.6	68.4	51.3
Female (%)	40.7	51.4	31.6	48.7
Median age	48	47	40	51
Aboriginal residents (no.)	4	397	0	49

**Table 5: Australian Census data for the Edward River LGA**

LGA	Edward River
People (no.)	8,456
Male (%)	49.3
Female (%)	50.7
Median Age	46
Aboriginal residents (no.)	410
Australian born (%)	43.8

ABS, Census 2021

## 3 Stakeholder identification and analysis

### 3.1 Stakeholder identification process

At the beginning of the project, we identify all stakeholders who would be affected by the project and compile demographic insights about the local community. This enables us to gain a comprehensive understanding of the stakeholders and communities surrounding our projects. We research using census data and may undertake local community research to inform our understanding of local community characteristics. During this process, we also identify the following:

#### Stakeholder types

- relevant political representatives at all three levels of government
- local businesses and the types of industries in the area
- First Nations groups in the area and the broader region
- local print media publications
- other local publications, such as community newsletters
- local radio and television media

- council list of community groups
- government offices present in the area
- emergency services nearest to the project.
- sensitive receivers such as places of worship, educational facilities, aged care homes, or facilities used by people with a disability
- any significant historical or recurring events in the area.

SQE team members also frequently visit the area to understand the local community and confirm and expand on the information found during the project feasibility stage.

### 3.2 Stakeholder overview

The key stakeholder groups identified for the Conargo Wind Farm and Battery include:

**Table 6: Identified stakeholders**

Stakeholder Group	Stakeholders
Host landholders	The project is located wholly on freehold land owned as one individual landholding
Neighbouring landholders	There are 10 neighbouring dwellings within 8km of the project area
Communities within the social locality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local community: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Conargo</li> <li>- Hartwood</li> <li>- Deniliquin</li> <li>- Jerilderie</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Government – State - NSW	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Crown Lands</li> <li>• Department of Finance, Services, and Innovation – NSW Telco Authority</li> <li>• NSW Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (NSW DCCEE) including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Biodiversity, Conservation and Science Directorate (BCSD)</li> <li>- Energy Corporation</li> <li>- Water Group</li> </ul> </li> <li>• NSW Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure (DPHI)</li> <li>• Department of Primary Industries – Agriculture and Fisheries (DPI)</li> <li>• NSW Environment Protection Authority (EPA)</li> <li>• Fire and Rescue NSW</li> <li>• Heritage NSW</li> <li>• NSW Rural Fire Service (RFS)</li> <li>• Regional NSW – Mining, Exploration and Geoscience (MEG)</li> <li>• Transport for NSW (Transport)</li> <li>• TransGrid</li> <li>• WaterNSW</li> <li>• NSW Renewable Energy Sector Board</li> </ul>
Government - Federal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Airservices Australia</li> </ul>

Stakeholder Group	Stakeholders
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bureau of Meteorology (BOM)</li> <li>• Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA)</li> <li>• Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF)</li> <li>• Department of Defence</li> <li>• Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCCEEW)</li> <li>• Australian Energy Market Operator (AEMO)</li> </ul>
<b>Local council</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Edward River Council</li> </ul>
<b>Government - elected representatives</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Federal Member for Farrer, The Honourable Sussan Ley MP</li> <li>• NSW Member for Murray, Helen Dalton MP</li> </ul>
<b>Community interest groups and community services</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deniliquin Lions Club</li> <li>• Rotary Club of Deniliquin</li> <li>• Country Women's Association Deniliquin</li> <li>• Deniliquin Lagoons Kolety Lagoons Landcare Group</li> <li>• Western Local Land Services (LLS)</li> <li>• Murray LLS</li> <li>• NSW Farmers, Deniliquin</li> <li>• Mid Murray Zone RFS</li> <li>• North Conargo Land Management Group</li> <li>• Murray Local Community Advisory Group</li> <li>• Murray Aboriginal Community Advisory Group</li> <li>• Murray Regional Weed Committee</li> <li>• Yanco Creek and Tributaries Advisory Council (YACTAC)</li> <li>• Conargo Hall and Recreation Ground Committee</li> </ul>
<b>Schools</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conargo Public School</li> <li>• Deniliquin High School</li> <li>• Deniliquin North Public School</li> <li>• Deniliquin South Public School</li> <li>• TAFE Deniliquin</li> <li>• Conargo Public School Parents and Citizens (P&amp;C) School Committee</li> <li>• Conargo School Council</li> </ul>
<b>First Nations groups</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NSW Aboriginal Land Council</li> <li>• Deniliquin Local Aboriginal Land Council (LALC)</li> <li>• Cummeragunja LALC</li> <li>• Yarkuwa Indigenous Knowledge Centre</li> </ul>
<b>Industry and local business</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deniliquin Business Chamber</li> <li>• Deniliquin Pastoral Times</li> <li>• ABC Riverina</li> <li>• END FM (radio)</li> <li>• 1521 2QN Deniliquin (radio)</li> <li>• Edge FM</li> <li>• Conargo Hotel</li> </ul>



### 3.3 First Nations engagement

SQE has a dedicated First Nations engagement team. The First Nations engagement team members work with project teams to provide guidance on culturally sensitive engagement and to develop a tailored approach to engaging with First Nations stakeholders.

SQE will engage with First Nations stakeholders in accordance with the relevant guidelines including:

- NSW Office of Energy and Climate Change (August 2022), *First Nations Guidelines, Increasing income and employment opportunities from electricity infrastructure projects*
- NSW Office of Environment and Heritage, Department of Premier and Cabinet (April 2011), *Guide to investigating, assessing and reporting on Aboriginal cultural heritage in NSW*
- Department of Environment, Climate Change and Water NSW (September 2010), *Code of Practice for Archaeological Investigation of Aboriginal Objects in New South Wales*
- Department of Environment, Climate Change and Water NSW (April 2010), *Aboriginal cultural heritage consultation requirements for proponents 2010*.

SQE takes a place-based approach to engagement, understanding that different communities and regions have diverse cultural practices, histories and stories. We collaborate with First Nations stakeholders to identify opportunities and challenges during project planning and development.

SQE:

- Carries out detailed stakeholder mapping to understand all representative groups in the region.
- Seeks to build relationships as early as possible with First Nations stakeholders prior to any formal engagement and consultation process.
- Is informed about cultural practices and protocols which may impact engagement methods and timelines.
- Engages comprehensively with indigenous communities as early as possible, in a way that is meaningful, suits the ways in which they want to be engaged and the frequency of that engagement.

As part of the Social Impact Assessment (SIA) Process, SQE works with First Nations stakeholders to:

- Apply relevant protocols for Aboriginal knowledge.
- Acknowledge and assess both tangible and intangible forms of cultural heritage.
- Engage traditional owners or custodians who can speak for Country.
- Allow Aboriginal decision-making processes to function effectively.
- Avoid conflict between engagement activities and cultural practices.
- Engage in places, at times, and in ways that encourage participation.
- Ensure that engagement is undertaken by people with appropriate skills and experience.

The SQE team released their Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) in April 2024. The plan includes multiple items that will review and measure SQE's engagement with First Nations stakeholders. It is available here: <https://www.squadronenergy.com/about/our-rap>

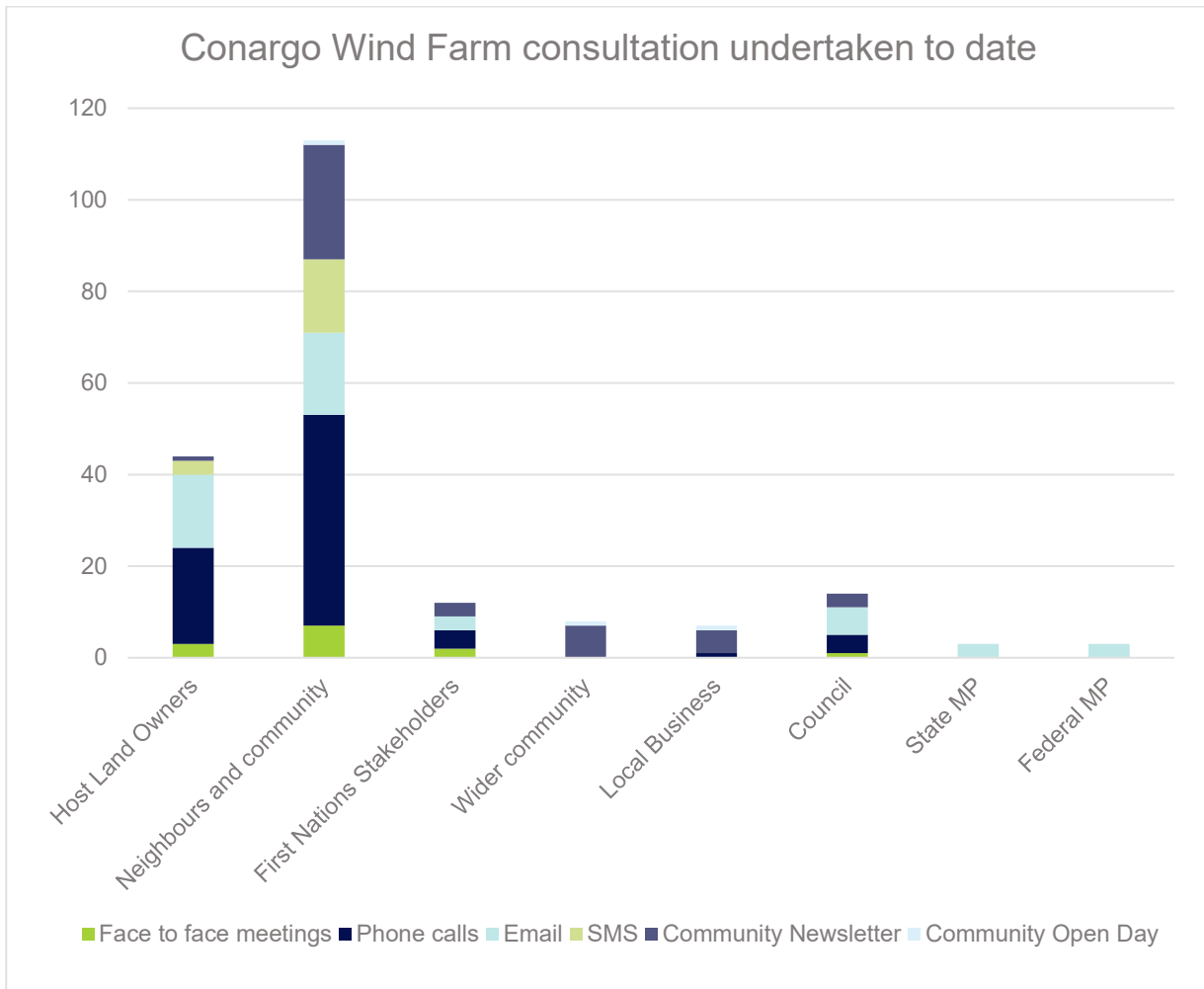
### 3.4 Stakeholder engagement activities

SQE has a dedicated Stakeholder Engagement and Community Relations team. These team members work with project teams to provide guidance on community and stakeholder engagement and to develop a tailored approach to engaging with communities and stakeholders.

Stakeholder engagement is ongoing during the lifecycle of the project and the project team will continue to engage with the community, regularly through face-to-face meetings, phone calls and emails.

Graph 1 summarises the engagement activities undertaken to 23 September 2024.

**Graph 1: Stakeholder engagement activities to 23 September 2024 for Conargo Wind Farm and Battery**



### 3.5 Stakeholder engagement by development stage

Table 7 outlines the engagement objectives and activities identified for the Conargo Wind Farm and Battery stakeholder groups, throughout the project life cycle, including what has been undertaken to date.

**Table 7: Stakeholder engagement during development for key project stages**

Project Stage	Engagement Objective	Engagement Activities	Target Stakeholders
Site selection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>identify local landholders within the potential project area</li> <li>introduce the project concept and obtain initial feedback about the prospect of a windfarm development</li> <li>seek agreements regarding access for further project feasibility investigations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>phone calls</li> <li>face to face visits</li> <li>introductory letters</li> <li>gather contact details for future communications</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>potential host landowners</li> <li>potential neighbouring landowners</li> </ul>

Project Stage	Engagement Objective	Engagement Activities	Target Stakeholders
<b>Project feasibility</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>engage with landholders about the proposed project area</li> <li>introduce the wind farm development process</li> <li>identify community values, potential constraints and opportunities in the project area and inform the design process</li> <li>identify and appropriately respond to community concerns</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>face to face visits</li> <li>one-on-one meetings and visuals tools to help inform discussions</li> <li>email or letter updates</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>potential host landowners</li> <li>potential neighbouring landowners</li> <li>local councils</li> <li>government-elected representatives</li> </ul>
<b>Planning and Approvals – (Scoping phase, EIS phase)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>maintain communication channels for enquiries and information</li> <li>continue to proactively gather feedback to inform the project design</li> <li>identify and appropriately respond to community concerns</li> <li>keep communications flowing to update the community</li> <li>collect data and insights and prepare the SIA</li> <li>inform community of any formal opportunity to express their views on the proposed project</li> <li>facilitate community understanding of the outcomes of the EIS and technical studies</li> <li>inform the community of the progress of the approvals process and outcomes</li> <li>discuss with the community the project-specific benefit sharing process</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>as above for project feasibility phase, plus:</li> <li>establish and maintain project website</li> <li>community information sessions</li> <li>community surveys</li> <li>project briefings for local councils and government agencies</li> <li>exploration of community partnerships and benefits</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>all stakeholder groups</li> </ul>
<b>Construction</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>reduce community concerns by open dialogue and continuing to acknowledge and respond to issues in a timely manner</li> <li>demonstrate commitment to the wellbeing of the community</li> <li>avoid, minimise, and remediate impacts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>as above for project feasibility phase, plus:</li> <li>maintain and update website</li> <li>complaints management mechanism</li> <li>community partnerships</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>all stakeholder groups</li> </ul>
<b>Commissioning and operation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>be an active member of the community</li> <li>strengthen collaboration through partnerships</li> <li>build a sense of community pride in a well-run wind farm</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>as above for construction phase, plus:</li> <li>operational community relations plan</li> <li>evaluation of engagement and improvements as required</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>all stakeholder groups</li> </ul>
<b>Decommissioning</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>communicate decommissioning and rehabilitation process</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>as above for commissioning and operation, plus:</li> <li>host landholder and neighbour briefings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>host landowners</li> <li>neighbours</li> <li>local councils</li> <li>State and Commonwealth government agencies</li> <li>community interest groups such as Landcare</li> <li>Aboriginal groups.</li> </ul>

## 4 Potential issues and opportunities

### 4.1 Potential social impacts

Table 8 summarises the potential impacts to people near to the project and the social impact categories that they may align to. The table also includes typical project issues that may be identified during engagement that are considered in the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) as part of other technical assessments (for example noise and air quality). Further information is available in the project's Scoping Report and Secretary's Environmental Assessment Requirements (SEARs) available on the NSW Major Projects website: <https://www.planningportal.nsw.gov.au/major-projects/projects/conargo-wind-farm>

The list of potential social issues is not exhaustive and may be modified and enhanced as the project progresses through the social impact assessment process.

For the purpose of this Stakeholder Engagement Plan, the social impact categories outlined in the Social Impact Assessment Guideline (DPIE, 2021) have been adopted.

**Table 8: Potential impacts to the community and stakeholders**

Impact	Potential EIS issue	Social impact category
Changes to the aesthetic value and amenity affecting surroundings and way of life	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>visual</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>surroundings</li> <li>way of life</li> </ul>
Increase in dust and noise during construction causing a decline in social amenity, health, or way of life for host landholders and nearby neighbours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>dust</li> <li>noise</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>way of life</li> <li>surroundings</li> <li>health and wellbeing</li> </ul>
Operational noise generated by WTGs causing a decline in social amenity, health, or way of life for host landholders and nearby neighbours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>noise</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>way of life</li> <li>surroundings</li> <li>health and wellbeing</li> </ul>
Changes to existing land use resulting in a disadvantage to personal property for nearby neighbours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>economic</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>livelihoods</li> <li>health and wellbeing</li> </ul>
Distributive equity of economic benefits, between the region and nearby neighbours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>economic</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>way of life</li> <li>community</li> </ul>
Enhanced community wellbeing from job opportunities and community investment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>economic</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>way of life</li> <li>community</li> </ul>
Changes to the existing land use resulting in the loss of native flora and fauna change how people experience their environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>biodiversity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>surroundings</li> </ul>
Impacts on people's access to roads and other services, especially during construction Potential improvement in access during operations for landowners and emergency services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>traffic and transport</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>accessibility</li> </ul>
Further changes to land use affecting community character resulting in a sense of loss of heritage values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>heritage</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>culture</li> </ul>
Changes to land use during construction, affecting the availability of land for livestock, impacting livelihoods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>land use management</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>livelihoods</li> </ul>
Potential reduction in security caused by unauthorised access and/or 'strangers' accessing land during both construction and operations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>access management</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>surroundings</li> </ul>

Impact	Potential EIS issue	Social impact category
Lack of trust in engagement approach affecting people's ability to feel they have the power to make an informed decision or influence project design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>community engagement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>decision making systems</li> </ul>

## 4.2 Potential Community benefit sharing

As the ultimate owner and operator of our projects, SQE is committed to being a positive contributor to the communities where we work. We share the benefits of our projects by supporting communities over the long term.

We recognise that each community is different and through partnerships with councils and local groups, and consultation and engagement with the community, we tailor benefits at each project to make a positive lasting contribution to each region.

As part of our stakeholder engagement process, we identify potential community benefit sharing opportunities based on community needs. We understand that each community is different, and not all community benefit sharing initiatives will be suitable. By engaging early, we can develop benefit sharing offerings alongside the community, resulting in better uptake and more community buy-in.

Squadron Energy strives to be an active participant in building community capacity at the local level and across our full project portfolio. We do this in many ways, as outlined in Table 9 with examples of Squadron Energy community benefit sharing across our projects. These examples are a starting point for engagement, allowing communities to understand what has been possible in other areas. We use the examples to prompt discussions and provide confidence that Squadron Energy is the right partner. They have been developed with communities to meet specific, localised, community needs, and some are used on more than one project if appropriate. They may be replicated, or they may be prompts for communities to identify their own opportunities and approaches for collaboration and long-term benefit.

**Table 9: Examples of Squadron Energy community benefit sharing across our projects**

<b>Community sponsorship program</b>	<p>Each of our projects has a community sponsorship program which provides funds or in-kind support to community organisations and events in the local project area. Additional information regarding this program can be found on our website.</p> <p>Local community groups are encouraged to apply for sponsorship - <a href="https://www.squadronenergy.com/communitysponsorship">https://www.squadronenergy.com/communitysponsorship</a>.</p>
<b>Voluntary Planning Agreements (VPA)</b>	<p>We enter into planning agreements for our projects with local councils in NSW. A planning agreement can help deliver or fund public infrastructure, amenities, and services for the benefit of the public within the council areas in which we operate. It may include a community benefit fund component.</p> <p>We work closely with councils to develop the terms of the planning agreements, which include a committed value of 1.5 per cent of the Capital Investment Value (CIV) of the project to be constructed. This is determined following our final investment decision. If the project is within multiple Local Government Areas (LGAs), the funds are divided on an agreed proportion, such as the number of turbines within each LGA.</p>
<b>Community Benefit Funds</b>	<p>Community Benefit Funds have been established for a number of SQE's operational sites. These funds may be managed by local councils or in some cases, an elected group of local community members who make decisions on how and where the funding is spent each year.</p>
<b>Community Co-investment</b>	<p>We rolled out Australia's first, large-scale, public, community investment into a utility-scale wind farm, via our Sapphire Wind Farm Community Co-investment Scheme. We may extend the program to the other regions where we are developing projects over time. Community co-investment offers residents in the region the opportunity to participate in and benefit from investing in Australia's transition to renewable energy.</p>

<b>Telecommunications</b>	Reliable connectivity is a challenge for many rural and regional communities across Australia. We recently completed a trial program to improve internet connectivity at one of our wind farm development sites in NSW. Following its success, we are now rolling out a connectivity improvement program for residents near our Uungula Wind Farm project. The program will boost network coverage through a fixed wireless network for landowners and neighbours, making stronger network coverage accessible at city-based prices. We are also piloting ag-tech grants as part of the program to enhance landowner's access to innovative agricultural technology to support their farming operations. We are looking at how we can roll out the program to our other wind farm projects where it's feasible, in consultation with nearby landowners and communities.
<b>Employment and business opportunities</b>	Early engagement in the development process can identify economic and employment opportunities. We operate and own firming, solar and wind energy assets in local communities, creating jobs for 30 years or more. For example, workforces during construction can peak as high as 500 in civil works, structural works, electrical works, wind turbine generation, battery and commissioning. Our Regional Economic Development team helps us to reach economic development and workforce targets and generate local content. For example, mandating of local content targets on Bango and Crudine Ridge wind farms. Our tender assessment and contractor selection criteria includes weighting to favour local suppliers and businesses.
<b>Training and skills development</b>	Engaging with local communities allows us to identify opportunities for skills development. For example, Squadron Energy has collaborated with TAFE NSW to create and deliver a digital Microskill course: "Introduction to the wind energy industry." We provided subject matter experts to create the lessons, and the course is now available to people interested in upskilling or cross skilling into the renewable energy sector.
<b>First Nations employment</b>	SQE is leading the industry on First Nations employment, with a First Nations engagement team focusing on creating pathways to employment and business opportunities. At Uungula Wind Farm, we are working with an industry partner to fund and deliver two trainee wind turbine technicians, providing them with more than 30 years of employment opportunity. Engagement with local First Nations communities can help us to identify opportunities for First Nations economic development, skills and employment.

## 5 Review

This plan will be reviewed and updated annually to reflect the progress of the project, and stakeholder engagement activity completed throughout the year. It is not intended for this document to be static, as engagement activity is ongoing.

SQE is committed to continually reviewing and updating our engagement approach to ensure we build long-term and meaningful relationships with the communities that host our projects.